TPC Group Plant Explosion and Fire Update
Port Neches, Texas
December 1, 2019 1500 Update

Incident Management Objectives:

Objective 1: Ensure the health and safety of the public and response personnel.

Objective 2: Establish an incident management structure and processes employing the Incident Command System to enable effective overall management of the event with deployment of resources (staff and equipment) in a rapid, focused and well-coordinated manner.

Objective 3: Encourage a collaborative federalism approach, where Federal, State, Tribal, and local governments interact cooperatively and collectively to solve common problems.

Objective 4: Take actions to assess the on-site and off-site impacts during the emergency response phase of this incident. Provide this information to state and local authorities to assist them in their decision to protect the local citizens.

Objective 5: Conduct activities to prevent off-site releases from the TPC facility.

Objective 6: Respond to, mitigate and recovery off-site releases from the TPC facility.

Objective 7: Maintain open communication with Regional management.

Incident Overview:

On November 27, 2019, a report was received from the National Response Center about an explosion at a facility in Port Neches, TX.

A second explosion occurred at approximately 1400 on November 27, 2019. Residents within a four-mile radius of the site were ordered to evacuate. The evacuation was lifted at 1000 on November 29, 2019.

Executive Overview:

- Unified Command continues to run a 24-hour operational period: 0600 to 0600.
- The Port Neches-Groves ISD will be closed on Monday, December 2, 2019.
- As of today, 235 responders have checked-in since the incident began. The actual number responders on-site however, is probably higher as many field personnel from different vendors likely have not been formerly checked in. Logistics has been requested to acquire a better number to track personnel.

- As of 1500 hours, a few fires continue to burn, and TPC will continue to provide suppression to the incident area for until the fires extinguish themselves. Smoke and particulate matter is low today. The wind has primarily been out of the north and northwest for the duration of the day, pushing the plume to the south and southeast.
- At 2325 on November 30, 2019, the South 45-B tower, which had been leaning, collapsed and fell to the east and is currently laying on the pipe rack. No injuries were reported during this incident, and all personnel have been accounted for. For safety purposes, all personnel were evacuated from the site and response activities were discontinued until daylight. The unmanned sprayers continued to supply firefighting water.
- At 0100 on December 1, 2019, CTEH air monitoring teams were picking up instantaneous readings of 3.0 ppm of butadiene at the Command Post located at the intersection of highway 366 and SPUR 136. The sustained readings were 2.28 ppm. The command post was moved to the entrance of the joint WWTP. At approximately 0230 hours, the sustained readings had reduced to 1.0 ppm. At 0445, air monitoring teams were detecting sustained readings of 0.79 ppm for butadiene in the same location. At 0537, there was a hit of 0.94 ppm. However, there have been no detections in the community or in any other area.
- In response to the instantaneous 3.0 ppm readings for butadiene, TCEQ air monitoring teams had dispatched to the intersection of highway 366 and SPUR 136. At approximately 0225 hours on December 1, 2019, TCEQ had reported instantaneous readings of 0.52 ppm for butadiene along with odors. At 0250, TCEQ reported instantaneous readings of 0.40 ppm along with odors. EPA air monitoring teams could not confirm these readings.
- Unified Command has given permission for foam use if necessary, for vapor suppression that is fluorine free. The OSC received and is reviewing the Safety Data Sheets for each type of foam used and remaining on site. TPC plans to stage 6 totes of foam for vapor suppression tomorrow.
- The current estimated rate of water use for fire suppression is approximately 14,000 gpm. Of that water use, 7,000 gallon per minute (gpm) is recycled water, leaving a net total of 7,000 gpm of freshwater use.
- The WWTP continues pumping firewater from the storage ponds into the WWTP. The current pumping rate is 7,000 gpm.
- TPC has placed 4000' of 18" hard boom and 5300' absorbent boom along the downstream path to the Neches River. As of December 1, 2019 the furthest extent of the sheen was 1.3 miles upstream from the Neches River. Sheen has been observed up to the Port Neches/Atlantic Road approximately 2 miles from the outfall.
- The GLO reported ~100 – 300 small dead fish at the canal waterfall upstream of the Port Neches Atlantic Road Bridge at 1000 hours on December 1, 2019. TCEQ has activated the Surface Water Quality Management Team (SWQMT). TPC has contacted Wildlife Response Services (Rhona Murgatroyd) to respond to the incident.
- On December 1, 2019 EPA collected 4 water samples (including a duplicate) in the affected canal up to the Neches River and 1 water sample upstream of the incident. Samples will be analyzed for VOCs, SVOCs, Oil and Grease, Glycols, Total Petroleum Hydrocarbons, and Total Organic Carbon. Samples, including those collected on November 30, will be delivered to ALS Laboratory in Houston for analysis on Monday morning, with the expectation of a 24-hour turnaround time on all analyses, except for SVOCs which has a 72-hour turnaround time.
- TCEQ and EPA air monitoring did not report any detections over public action levels for 1,3 butadiene, VOCs, and particulates since the last update sent at 1500 hours.
- CTEH has conducted 899 readings for 1,3 butadiene on December 1, 2019, as of approximately 1330 hours, 23 detections were recorded with a maximum reading of 3.22 ppm. The detections all occurred in the work area, and not in the community.

- ASPECT conducted a fly-over of the site on the afternoon November 30, 2019. No detections were recorded. ASPECT conducted a fly-over of the site on the morning of December 1, 2019. There was a detection of isobutylene.
- A Story Map has been created for the incident and is public at the [HYPERLINK "https://response.epa.gov/south4groupfire"] website.

Resources as of 1500 on December 1, 2019

	EPA	Contractors
Port Neches	3	9
Off site	3	6